



To shippe anon, no lenger they ne stente;
And in the see hit happed hem to mete,
Up goth the trompe, and for to shoute and
shete,
And peynen hem to sette on with the sonne.
With grisly soun out goth the grete gonne,
And heterly they hurtlen al at ones,
And fro the top down cometh the grete stones.
In goth the grapnel so ful of crokes
Among the ropes, and the shering hokes.
In with the polax presseth he and he;
Behind the mast beginneth he to flee,
And out agayn, and dryveth him overborde;
He stingeth him upon his speres orde;
He rent the sail with hokes lyke a sythe;
He bringeth the cuppe, and biddeth hem be
blythe;
He poureth pesen upon the hacches slider;
With pottes ful of lym they goon togider;
And thus the longe day in fight they spende
Til, at the laste, as every thing hath ende,
Antony is shent, and put him to the flighte,
And al his folk togo, that best go mighte.

HLEETH eek the queen, with al hir
purple sail,
for strokes, which that wente as
thikke as hail;

No wonder was, she mighte hit nat endure,
And whan that Antony saw that aventure,
Allas! quod he, the day that I was born!
My worshippe in this day thus have I lorn!
And for dispeyr out of his witte he sterte,
And roof himself anon throughout the
herte
Er that he ferther wente out of the place,
His wyf, that coude of Cesar have no grace,
To Egipte is fled, for drede & for distresse;
But herkneth, ye that speke of kindenesse.

DE men, that falsly sweren many an ooth
That ye wol dye, if that your love be
wrooth,
Heer may ye seen of women whiche a trouthe!
This woful Cleopatre hath mad swich routhe
That ther nis tonge noon that may hit telle.
But on the morwe she wol no lenger dwelle,
But made hir subtil werkmen make a shryne
Of alle the rubies and the stones fyne
In al Egipte that she coude espye;
And putte ful the shryne of spycerye,
And leet the cors embaume; & forth she fetre
This dede cors, and in the shryne hit shette.
And next the shryne a pit than doth she
grave;
And alle the serpents that she mighte have,

she putte hem in that grave, and thus she
seyde:
O love, to whom my sorweful herte
obeyde
So ferforthly that, fro that blisful
houre
That I yow swor to been al frely youre,
Imene yow, Antonius my knight!
That never waking, in the day or night,
Ye nere out of myn hertes remembraunce
for wele or wo, for carole or for daunce;
And in myself this covenant made I tho,
That, right swich as ye felten, wele or wo,
As ferforth as hit in my power lay,
Unreprovable unto my wyfhood ay,
The same wolde I felen, lyf or deeth.

And thilke covenant, whyl me lasteth breeth,
I wol fulfille, and that shal wel be sene;
Was never unto hir love a trewer quene.
And with that word, naked, with ful good
herte,
Among the serpents in the pit she sterte,
And ther she chees to han hir buryinge.
Anoon the neddres gonne her for to stinge,
And she hir deeth receyveth, with good chere,
for love of Antony, that was hir so dere:
And this is storial sooth, hit is no fable.
Now, er I finde a man thus trewe and
stable,
And wol for love his deeth so freely take,
I pray God lat our bedes never ake!
Explicit Legenda Cleopatrie martiris.

INCIPIT LEGENDA TESBE BABILONIE MARTIRIS



BABILOINE WHYLOM FIL IT THUS,
The whiche toun the queen Semiramus
Leet dichen al about, and walles make
ful hye, of harde tyles wel ybake.
Ther weren dwellinge in this noble toun
Two lordes, which that were of greet renoun,
And wonden so nigh, upon a grene,
That ther nas but a stoon wal hem bitwene,
As ofte in grete townes is the wone.
And sooth to seyn, that o man hadde a sone,
Of al that londe oon of the lustieste.
That other hadde a doghter, the faireste,
That estward in the world was tho dwellinge.
The name of everich gan to other springe
By women, that were neighbores aboute.
For in that contree yit, withouten doute,
Maidens been ykept, for jelosye,
ful streite, lest they diden som folye.
This yonge man was cleped Piramus,
And Tisbe hight the maid, Naso seith
thus;
And thus by report was hir name yshove
That, as they waxe in age, wax hir love;
And certain, as by reson of hir age,

Ther mighte have been bitwix hem mariage,
But that hir fadres nolde hit nat assente;
And bothe in love plynke sore they brente,
That noon of alle hir frendes mighte hit
lette
But prively somtyme yit they mette
By sleighte, and speken som of hir desyr;
As, wry the glee, and hotter is the fyr;
forbede a love, and it is ten so wood.
THIS wal, which that bitwix hem bothe
stood,
Was cloven atwo, right fro the toppe
adoun,
Of olde tyme of his fundacioun;
But yit this clifte was so narwe and lyte,
It nas nat sene, dere ynogh a myte.
But what is that, that love can nat espye?
Ye lovers two, if that I shal nat lye,
Ye founden first this litel narwe clifte;
And, with a soun as softe as any shrifte,
They lete hir wordes through the clifte pace,
And tolden, whyl that they stode in the place,
Al hir compleynt of love, and al hir wo,
At every tyme whan they dorste so.
UPON that o syde of the wal stood he,
And on that other syde stood Tisbe,
The swote soun of other to receyve,
And thus hir wardeins wolde they deceyve.
And every day this wal they wolde threte,
And wisse to God, that it were down ybete.
Thus wolde they seyn: Allas! thou wikked
wal,
Through thyn envye thou us lettest al!
Why nilt thou cleve, or fallen al atwo?
Or, at the leste, but thou woldest so,
Yit woldestow but ones lete us mete,
Or ones that we mighte kissen swete,
Than were we covered of our cares colde.
But natheles, yit be we to thee holde
In as muche as thou suffrest for to goon
Our wordes through thy lyme and eek thy
ston.
Yit oghte we with thee ben wel apayd.